Outcome-Oriented SRO Performance Measures:

Learning from a Pilot Study

December 2004

Circle
Solutions,
Inc.

Circle Solutions, Inc., is a woman- and employee-owned management consulting firm committed to providing services and products in support of healthier, safer people and communities.

Circle Solutions, Inc.
8280 Greensboro Drive
Suite 300
McLean, VA 22102
www.circlesolutions.com

Table of Contents

Introduction

As of October 1, 2004, the Office of Community Oriented Policing Services (COPS Office) has invested $746 million in nearly 3,000 law enforcement agencies across the Nation to place more than 6,500 school resource officers (SROs) in U.S. schools to improve school safety and enhance local community policing partnerships. This influx of resources significantly changed the landscape in schools, making sworn officers a regular member of the school staff—something that was once the exception rather than the rule. Then, in an effort to provide direction and support to these newly funded SROs and the school leaders that work with them, the COPS Office has spent an additional $20 million to date to train these SROs and their school partners to implement community policing in schools. Having funded the hiring and training of these SROs at a National level, the COPS Office further saw the importance of investing in a pilot performance evaluation approach to encourage SROs to perform to their highest ability. This pilot approach was envisioned and implemented by Circle Solutions, Inc., in six schools across the Nation, in partnership with five law enforcement agencies and four school districts.

Statement of the Problem

The guiding principles that framed the demonstration project are:

1. Holding SROs accountable for *results/outcomes* (e.g., reducing school-based crime and disorder problems) rather than *activities performed* (e.g., number of classroom presentations) leads to more effective policing and a reduction in school crime and disorder problems.
2. SROs have different objectives and perform a distinctly different function for law enforcement agencies than do patrol officers/deputies or any other unit within the department. As such, the benchmarks used to assess and promote their success in the job must differ as well.
3. Involving customers in setting goals for the SROs allows the SROs to better understand the nature of and satisfy the expectations of their customers.

1. **Holding SROs accountable for *results/outcomes* (e.g., reducing school-based crime and disorder problems) rather than *activities performed* (e.g., number of classroom presentations) leads to more effective policing and a reduction in school crime and disorder problems.**

Deputy Chief Timothy Oettmeier and Dr. MaryAnn Wycoff, in their description of the Houston Police Department experiment in performance evaluation, recognize that, "Performance evaluation must be more than just a means of obtaining information about how well employees improved their KSAs [Knowledge, Skills, and Abilities]. It should help management gauge, from different perspectives, how well employees

are *using* their KSAs, what results they are attaining…."[1] The benchmarks for the officer's success will dictate his/her actions. If the benchmarks are to attain certain skills or an activity level, then the officer will achieve the skills or conduct the activities and may or may not actually accomplish the objective that those skills or activities are designed to accomplish.

Dr. George Kelling, Rutgers University professor in the School of Criminal Justice, also promotes "a system that would measure actual results as citizens might experience them, rather than such apparent efforts such as arrest." He infers that a performance process that emphasizes activities rather than outcomes is aimed to show, "we held up our end" rather than "we solved the problem."[2] Wycoff and Oettmeier, in their report about the Houston, Texas experience revising police performance evaluation within the context of community policing, also concluded that performance evaluation of an officer should be linked to the welfare of the neighborhood he/she is serving. They explain that using performance measures that are aligned with organizational goals provides a catalyst to shape officer behavior and facilitates organizational change.[3] Dr. Mark Moore, professor of criminal justice policy and public management at Harvard University's John F. Kennedy School of Government, supports a "balanced scorecard" for policing, a system of multifaceted measures directed by what the customers want from police and that are specific to the role of the officer, outcome-oriented, measurable, and balanced against the financial costs and the cost of authority that are used to produce the outcomes.[4]

Under this pilot project, SROs were asked to accomplish outcome goals and track and assess the actions that they took to do so. Performance was assessed on the ability to achieve the goals, with an appreciation for the effort put forth to do so. This approach was designed to maximize the autonomy of the SRO(s), to try varied approaches to achieve the outcome goals, and placed the emphasis on the goals, rather than any one of the means to achieve them.

2. SROs have different objectives and perform a distinctly different function for law enforcement agencies than do patrol officers/deputies or any other unit within the department. As such, the benchmarks used to assess and promote their success in the job must differ as well.

The principles of community policing apply to both officers who serve neighborhoods and SROs who serve schools. In both cases, an officer is expected to partner with his/her customers to address crime and disorder issues through problem solving. There is one critical difference that changes the nature of the community policing efforts in these two settings. The school is composed of a unique set of customers. Not only is the largest group of customers composed of students, but these young citizens do not choose to belong to the community, as residents and business

---

[1] Oettmeier and Wycoff, 1998, p. 381.
[2] Kelling, 1999, p.33.
[3] Oettmeier and Wycoff, 1993.
[4] Moore, 2002.

owners may; rather, the students are compelled to attend school. Despite similar goals, this difference in community composition dramatically impacts the approaches available to SROs, and the expectations of SROs, compared to their neighborhood counterparts. This difference must be reflected in the direction given to SROs, the goals set for them, and how their performance effectiveness is determined.

Noting these above difference, a national expert panel has recommended that SROs perform three unique roles: as law enforcers, educators, and mentors to youth. These roles may not typically have been undertaken by community policing officers in the past, but are representative of the activities SROs are currently undertaking or are expected to undertake within the school environment. Examples of the activities deemed appropriate to fulfilling the SRO program goals include teaching about law in the classroom, handling criminal law infractions, assisting with safe school planning, and acting as a link with the police department and other community resources.[5]

SROs who have attended COPS in Schools (CIS) training report that they are teaching in classrooms. SRO training topics include bullying, drugs, date rape, gangs, criminal justice, alcohol use, boating and hunting safety, court procedures, bus safety, water safety, CPR, stranger safety, Miranda rights, and domestic violence. SROs report that they are partnering with school administrators to review and amend school policies. These policies have addressed cell phones and laptops, visitation, canine and other searches, weapons, dress codes, bullying, drug testing, and pickup and drop-off of students. Also, SROs oversee programs, including programs on gang prevention (e.g., GREAT), substance abuse (e.g., Chance to Change), crime prevention (e.g., Crime Stoppers, Student Watch, Varsity Patrol), law enforcement as a career (e.g., Police Explorers, Junior Police Cadet), violence (e.g., Students Against Violence Everywhere—SAVE, Break the Silence/Stop the Violence), conflict resolution and peer mediation, and effective decision-making (e.g., Students Against Destructive Decisions). SROs participate in lockdown drills and fire drills, track incidents on computer tracking software, review school data, participate in after-school activities, counsel/mentor at-risk students, perform Crime Prevention through Environmental Design (CPTED) analyses,[6] and conduct emergency and crisis planning.

Patrol deputies/officers do not routinely find themselves mentoring those that they serve or preparing lesson plans and standing before a group of 30 residents teaching them about the law or safety issues, nor do they often perform a CPTED analysis and make recommendations to city officials on changes to lighting, traffic flow, or fencing and public/private space issues. Patrol officers do not typically study child development, deal with issues of bullying, or lead a Police Explorer program.

Likewise, SROs don't spend a significant amount of time conducting traffic stops, responding to calls for service, or investigating burglaries. The two jobs simply are not the same. As early as 1980, Whitaker and his colleagues acknowledged that

---

[5] Rinehart, Laszlo, and Wilson, 1999.
[6] CPTED uses natural access control, natural surveillance, and territorial reinforcement to reduce and prevent crime in a defined geographic area.

performance measures should be tailored and flexible enough to accommodate diverse problems and different police behaviors and results.[7]

Pamela Riley, Executive Director of the National Association of Students Against Violence Everywhere, notes that one of the three biggest challenges to the SRO program, next to establishing clear expectations for SROs and maintaining good relationships among all those involved in the school, is evaluating the SROs' performance.[8] The pilot project offers a solution to that challenge and may even facilitate meeting the other two challenges Dr. Riley presents.

Certainly, some basic performance expectations (e.g., punctuality; knowledge of criminal statutes, traffic laws, and local ordinances; application of department policies; cooperation with others) may apply to SROs and patrol officers, as well as all other positions in the law enforcement agency. The purpose of the pilot was to establish appropriate performance tools that could supplement the core values used for all levels and functions within law enforcement with those specific to the unique goals and activities of the SROs.

3. **Involving customers in setting goals for the SROs allows the SROs to better understand the nature of and satisfy the expectations of their customers.**

As public service organizations funded by city, county, or school budgets, law enforcement agencies have always depended upon their customers to be satisfied with their services in order to retain funding and support. Mark Moore and his colleagues purport that as taxpayers, citizens are the customers to whom police have a responsibility to satisfy.[9]

When law enforcement agencies implement community policing, they are further motivated to satisfy policing customers. Community policing, by design, involves the recipient of police services. Police collaborate with customers to set and accomplish their goals. This puts services to customers in the limelight. A fundamental strategy under community policing is to convene a meeting of customers and ask them, "What are the problems in this neighborhood?" The theory behind this approach is that police don't always know the neighborhood's needs and priorities and so should involve those living in the neighborhood to determine the needs/priorities and develop solutions to address them.

The customer service literature[10] establishes that customer service is not merely customer relations, nor how nice frontline workers are to customers. Rather, satisfying or even delighting customers, is the goal of excellent customer service. So, how can police satisfy or delight their customers? The five guiding principles adopted by public and private agencies delivering excellent customer service include:

---

[7] Whitaker, et al., 1980.
[8] Riley, 1999.
[9] Moore, 2002.
[10] Rinehart, 2000.

- Embrace change and persistently strive to improve
- Continually ask the target customers what they want and then give it to them
- Empower, support, and reward frontline personnel
- Harness the power of information
- Establish an enabling infrastructure.

The customer service literature further elaborates that the steps to take toward achieving these principles include:

- Identifying the target customer
- Asking customers what they want most, using appropriate mechanisms
- Comparing the prioritized customer "wants" to what the organization can provide and which of those "wants" can impact the organization's bottom line (e.g., loyalty, trust, compliance, profit)
- Establish an organizational culture supportive of customer service:
  - Train frontline workers
  - Empower frontline workers by clearly defining the parameters of autonomy, keeping the rules simple, and encouraging creativity
  - Provide necessary information, technology and financial resources to perform the job
  - Recruit employees who support the vision
  - Have management who support employee decisions
  - Have supervisors mentor employees instead of traditional supervisory approaches
  - Establish cross-functional teams
  - Link employee compensation and rewards to good customer service performance
  - Measure employee satisfaction
- Advertise/share information with customers to inform their expectations
- Provide a mechanism for customers to provide feedback
- Measure customer satisfaction with services

The pilot project implemented as many components of the customer service literature as possible. SROs, SRO supervisors, and the school administrators of the school being served carefully identified representatives of SRO customers. Then, these customers were involved in a process to identify and prioritize their expectations for the SROs. Strategies were employed to ensure that SROs had the resources needed to address the prioritized goals. Supervisors tried to mentor SROs. Customer feedback was incorporated into activity planning and into performance evaluation.

The three guiding principles led Circle to create and test an SRO performance evaluation process that valued outcomes over activities, integrated customer involvement, and is different from any traditional performance evaluation process undertaken to evaluate patrol officers.

Project Purpose

The objectives of the Outcome-Oriented SRO Performance Measures Project were to:

1. Develop and study a process for law enforcement, school administrators, SROs, and customers of SROs to establish expectations with and for SROs and the schools/communities they serve
2. Develop measurable, reliable, validated, multi-faceted and outcome-oriented, site-specific performance measures for SROs
3. Implement the performance measures, while observing the process and verifying the reliability and validity of the performance measures
4. Assess feedback from SROs and their customers regarding whether the newly developed measures, as implemented, reflect the activities and expectations of the SRO role
5. Compare the variations of the process and outcomes across the six study sites to draw tentative conclusions about the usefulness of the process to other law enforcement agencies and schools

Project Team

Circle's project team was comprised of the project director (PD), Tammy Rinehart Kochel; two senior site liaisons, Anna Laszlo and Laura Nickles; two research associates, Alyssa Huntoon and Sean Currigan; and three technical advisors: an expert in community policing-based performance evaluation systems, Dr. Timothy Oettmeier, Executive Assistant Chief, Houston Police Department; a statistician, Dr. Joel Garner; and an expert in law enforcement labor contract issues, Mr. Kevin Comerford, Commissioner, Erie County Department of Central Police Services.

Circle's project team worked with five law enforcement agencies and six middle/high schools in the following jurisdictions to implement the demonstration project:

- Boise (Idaho) Police Department at Capital High School
- Naperville (Illinois) Police Department at Neuqua Valley High School
- Port St. Lucie (Florida) Police Department at St. Lucie West Middle School[11]
- Rochester (New York) Police Department at Marshall High School and East High School
- St. Lucie County (Florida) Sheriff's Department at Forest Grove Middle School and St. Lucie West Middle School[12]

---

[11] Initially, Southern Oaks Middle School in Port St. Lucie, FL also participated, but the school administrator chose to withdraw because both the SRO and SRD at the school that had participated in the initial focus group were replaced early in the project.

[12] St. Lucie County Sheriff's Department and Port St. Lucie Police Department jointly serve St. Lucie West Middle School.

To initiate the project, Circle garnered the support of the law enforcement executives in each of the demonstration sites.[13] The law enforcement executives solicited the support of the school district administrator. The participation of the executives of the law enforcement agencies and the school districts was essential to support the collaboration that was necessary between the local school(s) and law enforcement agency(ies). Additionally, it was important that the individual SROs and other project participants were aware of this high level of support for the demonstration project and the activities that they were about to undertake.

Demonstration Site Selection

Site selection was based on the following:
- Commitment to community policing and the SRO program as evidenced by participation in COPS in Schools
- Diversity of the communities (e.g. size, demographics, socioeconomic factors)
- Geographic diversity
- Diversity of school-based crime and disorder problems (e.g., bullying, serious drug and gang-related violence, vandalism, theft)
- Diversity of union versus non-union law enforcement agencies
- Size and location of police agencies (e.g., urban versus suburban or rural and large, medium, and small departments)
- Diversity of deployment plans for the SROs (e.g., high school, middle school, elementary school, and after-school activities)

Obtaining diversity amongst the sites was important so that the resulting project findings are applicable to a cross-section of law enforcement and schools nationally. This allows the research team to provide recommendations for replicating the process to a broad constituency of law enforcement agencies and school districts.

The five communities selected meet these criteria. They are located in different sized cities and a county in locales across the Nation, with varied racial and socioeconomic characteristics, differences in crime and education statistics, and commitment to, but with varied approaches, the SRO program and deployment. Across sites, violent crimes (murder, rape, robbery, assault) varied from 13% of the national average to 4 times the national average. Property crimes varied from 48% of the national average to 2.3 times the national average. Median household incomes varied from 60% of the national average to more than twice the national average. The proportion of children in poverty ranged from 2.3% of children to 32.7% of children in the community. The six schools varied greatly in racial demographics, including Caucasian majority and African American majority schools. The percentage of students eligible for free or reduced lunches varied from none to 75% of students. Half of the participating schools are Title I schools and receive additional funding from the federal government.

---

[13] St. Lucie County Sheriff's Department joined the project after the project had begun, but the approach was the same—first seeking the interest and support of the Sheriff.

Naperville, Illinois. Naperville, with a current population of 139,654, is located thirty miles west of Chicago, Illinois. In December 2003, it was named *Money Magazine's* "Best Place to Live" in the Midwest among cities with populations of more than 100,000. According to the U.S. Census Bureau, Naperville's population increased 48% from 1990 to 2000. The growing community boasts the top-ranked library system in the Nation in the 100,000 to 249,999-population category. Sometimes referred to as the "Silicone Prairie," major area corporations include Lucent Technologies, BP Amoco, and the corporate headquarters for Tellabs International.

The Naperville Police Department has seven school resource officers serving eleven schools in the community's two school districts. The Naperville Police Department has a standardized performance evaluation process that is different for school resource officers than patrol officers. Nevertheless, performance evaluations are not usually tied to consequences such as promotion or transfer, and the evaluations are not outcome-based. There are few to no consequences to the evaluation, and comments from the school administrator are included.

Boise, Idaho. The city of Boise is the capital of Idaho and its largest metropolitan area. Since 1990, the population increased 37% to 185,787 residents in 2000. The population is predominantly Caucasian and middle class. Major area employers include Micron Technology, Inc., Mountain Home Air Force Base, and Albertsons.

The Boise Police Department and the Boise Independent School District began their school resource officer program in 1970. The program has grown to include twenty-seven officers, including six high school SROs, ten junior high SROs, seven elementary SROs, two roving SROs, and two supervisors. The Boise Police Department has a standardized performance evaluation that evaluates school resource officers differently from patrol officers. Nevertheless, performance evaluations are not usually tied to consequences such as promotion or transfer, and the evaluations are not outcome-based.

Rochester, New York. Rochester is an urban community with a population of approximately 220,000. In recent years, the city has seen a continual decline in its population as major industries such as Kodak, Xerox, and Bausch-Lomb either have significantly reduced their Rochester-based workforce or have closed facilities entirely, leaving a substantial number of workers unemployed. Census statistics show a 4.81% population decrease from 1990 to 2000. Rochester city schools form the third largest school district in New York.

The Rochester Police Department initiated the SRO program in 1998 with sixteen SROs, growing to twenty SROs in schools, plus two truancy SROs, a SRO coordinator, and a SRO cadet program facilitator at the beginning of the project. SROs are deployed in the high schools, middle schools, and elementary schools. The Department underwent a major reorganization during the project period, and the number of the SROs was recently decreased. The evaluation process is standardized, and both school resource officers and patrol officers go through the same

performance evaluation. School administrators do not participate in that process. Performance evaluations are conducted for self-assessment and improvement and have no consequences such as promotion, demotion, or transfer. The Rochester Police Department is unionized in a State with strong civil service laws and performance evaluation that is governed by contract.

Port St. Lucie, Florida. The city of Port St. Lucie is located on the east coast of South Florida, approximately 50 miles north of West Palm Beach. Census statistics from 1990 to 2000 show a 60% increase in population. Since 2000, the population increased another 25% totaling 111,000 residents in 2003. The community is predominantly Caucasian and middle class.

Port St. Lucie is a relatively new city with more than 25% of the buildings constructed in 1995 or later. With only half of its 95 square miles developed, there is a large capacity for future growth in this largely residential coastal community. The county school district "controlled choice" system means that students are bused across city jurisdiction lines, so the composition of the schools is not always reflective of the immediate community in which it is located. Both the Port St. Lucie Police Department and the St. Lucie County Sheriff's Office serve the community. Both law enforcement agencies work conjointly at one of the demonstration sites. The Port St. Lucie Police Department has 14 school resource officers serving 16 schools. Its school resource officer program began in 1990 and is guided by a contract between the police department and the school district. The department's standardized performance evaluation process is the same for both school resource officers and patrol officers. Performance evaluations have various consequences ranging from promotions and raises to transfers.

Fort Pierce, Florida. Fort Pierce is the county seat of St. Lucie County, twelve miles north of the city of Port St. Lucie. Unlike Port St. Lucie, census statistics show no increase in population from 1990 to 2000. The 37,516 residents are split evenly between Caucasian and African American, with a large Dominican and Haitian contingency. Fort Pierce's low-income, working-class community shares its school district with Port St. Lucie. As a result of a series of desegregation rulings, the school district has gone from forced busing of students across jurisdictions to a "controlled choice" system that gives parents the option to send their children to a one of several zone schools. The end result, however, is that children still are being bused across community lines. As mentioned previously, this means that the students within a school do not necessary represent the demographics of the immediate neighborhood in which the school is located.

The St. Lucie County Sheriff's Office school resource deputy program started in 1984. During the 2003–2004 academic year, there were 28 deputies in the schools. Unlike the other law enforcement agencies, employees of the Sheriff's Office are not unionized. Much like the Port St. Lucie Police Department, the Sheriff's Office also has a standardized performance evaluation for all deputies. Evaluations can influence raises, transfers, promotions, and demotions.

Additional community statistics demonstrating the diversity of the project sites are provided in the charts below.

Table 1

	National Average	Naperville, IL	Boise, ID	Rochester, NY	Port St. Lucie, FL	Fort Pierce, FL
Violent Crimes[a]	506.1	65.9	375.2	729.7	250.7	2,032.5
Property Crimes[a]	3,617.9	1,746.0	4,413.5	6,982.9	2,547.3	8,497.2
Median Household Income[b]	$41,994	$88,771	$42,432	$27,123	$40,509	$25,121
Total 2000 Population[b]		128,358	185,787	219,773	88,769	37,516

[a]Crimes per 100,000 in population, FBI Uniform Crime Reports, 2001 (released in 2002).
[b]U.S. Census Bureau, 2000.

Table 2

	Indian Prairie School District 204	Boise Independent District	Rochester City School District	St. Lucie County School District
State[a]	IL	ID	NY	FL
Total Schools[a]	30	55	69	43
Total Students[a]	25,795	26,266	35,659	31,554
Student/Teacher Ratio[a]	16.1	17.6	12.1	15.8
% Children in Poverty[b]	2.3%	8.8%	32.7%	17.6%
Total Current Expenditures[b]	$148,398	$177,704	$438,002	$179,117
Expenditure per Student[b]	$6,404	$6,681	$12,068	$6,064

[a]National Center for Education Statistics (NCES), 2002-2003 Common Core of Data (CCD), public school district data for 2002-2003 school year.
[b]NCES latest available fiscal data—2000-2001 school year.

Table 3

	Neuqua Valley High School	Capital Senior High School	East High School	John Marshall High School	St. Lucie West Middle School	Forest Grove Middle School
Location	Naperville, IL	Boise, ID	Rochester, NY	Rochester, NY	Port St. Lucie, FL	Ft. Pierce, FL
Grade Span	9-12[a]	10-12	9-12	7-12	6-8	6-8
# SROs in school	1	1	3	1	2	2
Total Students[b]	3,231	1,589	2,139	1,353	988	1,224
Student/ Teacher Ratio[b]	15.6	18.2	14.2	13.5	22.5	18.0
Title I School[b]	No	No	Yes	Yes	No	Yes
% Free/ Reduced Lunch Eligible[b]	0%	16%	40%	42%	49%	75%
% Caucasian[b]	81%	92%	12%	14%	75%	41%
% African American[b]	6%	1%	60%	74%	15%	39%
% Hispanic[b]	4%	4%	25%	11%	8%	19%
% Other[b]	10%	3%	3%	1%	2%	1%
Migrant Students[b]	N/A	0	N/A	N/A	29	270

[a]Neuqua Valley High School includes grades 9-12, but during the 2003/2004 school year ninth grade students were moved to a separate freshmen center. As such, the SRO Performance Measures project pertained only to grades 10-12.
[b]National Center for Education Statistics, 2002-2003 Common Core of Data.

Research Design and Implementation

The following section describes the research design and implementation timeline.

Implementation Timeline

DEC 02	
JAN 03	→ Review of Literature
FEB 03	→ Orientation Meeting
MAR 03	
APR 03	→ Focus Group #1
MAY 03	→ Measurement Operationalization
JUN 03	
JUL 03	→ Focus Group #2
AUG 03	
SEP 03	
OCT 03	→ Baseline Data Collection
NOV 03	
DEC 03	
JAN 04	→ Implementation Period
FEB 04	→ Supervisor/SRO Meetings
MAR 04	
APR 04	
MAY 04	→ Follow-up Data Collection
	→ Focus Group #3
JUN 04	→ Final Site Meeting
DEC 04	→ Implementation Guide and Final Report Submission

Task 1: Review of the Literature

To establish a foundation for this project among existing research, a comprehensive review of literature was undertaken and updated throughout the project period. This review focused on research concerning community policing by SROs in schools, police accountability, and measuring police performance. The literature review was presented at the orientation meeting for the pilot sites in Atlanta, Georgia.

Task 1 Results

The literature provides the following key findings in support of the project:

- In the years preceding the project, students reported feeling more secure at school than they had in the past; yet, they also reported the presence of street gangs in schools, drug sales, increased bullying, and 7 to 9% of students being threatened or injured with a weapon on school property.[14]
- The role of the SRO is to implement community policing in schools, serving as law enforcers, educators, and mentors.[15]
- Performance evaluation can be used to support and further police organizational goals if officer performance measures support organizational goals.[16] Furthermore, when the police agency is implementing community policing, Oettmeier and Wycoff recommend linking officer goals to the welfare of the community in which they serve.[17]
- Customers and officers should be involved in developing performance measures. Involving officers allows them to better understand the utility of performance evaluation,[18] and officers will be more satisfied with the evaluation process and the recognition received for their work.[19] If an ongoing goal of the SRO program is to satisfy the customer, and Moore argues that *is* the goal in community policing, then performance evaluation must solicit customer expectations and include them in an outcome-oriented performance process.[20]
- Capturing quantitative measures of the activities that officers perform is easier than collecting qualitative information that captures how well an officer performs those activities. When capturing or measuring something is difficult, often the easy-to-capture, quantitative measure is used instead, elevating the importance of what is measurable, rather than measuring that which is important.[21]
- While a handful of attempts have been made to assess SRO programs, nothing in the literature documents individual SRO performance evaluation.

Task 2: Orientation Meeting

Circle convened a two-day orientation meeting with the COPS Project Officer and representatives from Boise, Idaho; Naperville, Illinois; Port St. Lucie, Florida; and,

---

[14] DeVoe, et. al, 2002.

[15] Rinehart, Laszlo, and Wilson, 1999.

[16] Oettmeier and Wycoff, 1998; Langworthy, 1999.

[17] Oettmeier and Wycoff, 1993.

[18] Trojanowicz and Bucqueroux, 1992.

[19] Oettmeier and Wycoff, 1993.

[20] Moore, et.al., 2002.

[21] Trojanowicz and Bucqueroux, 1992.

Rochester, New York. Each team consisted of a school administrator, police executive, law enforcement labor representative, and SRO. The school administrator and police executive were invited to further promote commitment and support for the project at the highest levels in the two partner organizations and with hopes to solidify the collaboration between the two. The labor representative was invited so that the Circle and site teams could gain an understanding of the labor contract provisions for performance evaluation, how the project may be influenced by those contracts, to ensure that union representatives understood the project purpose and components, and to build support for the project within the union. The SRO's involvement was critical because the project was dependent on active participation and support from the SRO. While the Circle team also saw the benefit and need to include the SRO supervisor, project funds were limited and only four site representatives could attend. To cope with this shortfall, sites were encouraged to send either a law enforcement executive or a labor union representative who also had supervisory responsibilities.

The orientation meeting provided an opportunity for each of the demonstration sites to provide a brief history of their SRO program, describe the demographics of their community and school, and articulate the expectations they had for the project. During the meeting, the group:

- Discussed the project purpose and milestones
- Developed a shared vision for the project, specific to each site's needs
- Selected a team leader and primary point of contact for each site who was responsible for coordinating the focus group meetings, facilitating the collection of baseline and follow-up data, ensuring activity log submission, and serving as a liaison between Circle and the site teams
- Delineated roles and responsibilities of the demonstration site project team leader and members and Circle's project team
- Outlined a communication strategy among the demonstration sites and between the demonstration sites and Circle, including the establishment of a "members only" Web site and listserv to facilitate communication and information sharing
- Addressed data collection issues, confidentiality, and data sharing
- Developed a project implementation timeline, including setting feasible dates for the first on-site focus group meeting
- Listed potential customers of the SRO in each site who were to be invited to attend the first on-site focus group meeting

Task 2 Results
The three important results of this meeting were as follows:

1. We learned that the SROs with whom we were working really did want a different measuring stick—they wanted a way to show the good work they were doing, and traditional measures were not accomplishing this.
2. The sites enthusiastically embraced the project, from chief to school administrator to SRO to union representative.

3. We now had a project plan:
    - Each site was paired with a Circle Point of Contact (CPOC) and the project vision, roles and responsibilities, communication plan, provisions for information sharing, and implementation plan were compiled into site specific Memorandums of Understanding (MOUs).
    - Six schools were selected to pilot the effort.[22]
    - Three of the sites chose the SRO to be the team leader, and one selected the school administrator. When multiple schools from the same jurisdiction participated, a leader from each school was selected. Changes in personnel led to changes in leadership. By the end of the project, five of the six schools project teams were led by the SRO, and one was led by an SRO supervisor.
    - Nearly all orientation-meeting participants joined the members-only Web site and listserv. Web site postings included the literature review, site visit reports, each site's priorities and activity lists, activity log forms, surveys, project newsletters, relevant articles, and a School COP activities PowerPoint presentation from Abt Associates, Inc. Messages included notes of congratulation for SRO achievements and some project updates.

Task 3: First Focus Group Meeting

The purpose of the first focus group was to:

- Describe the purpose and timeline of the project to the SRO's customers and solicit their participation
- Identify and prioritize three to six school specific outcomes—the goals that the customers want the SRO(s) to accomplish within a four to six month implementation period
- Identify the activities that the SRO could undertake to accomplish the outcomes
- Identify the data sources that may be used to measure whether the SRO accomplished the identified outcomes

The site leader invited focus group participants and coordinated the logistics for the meeting—this is a theme throughout this project. The rationale for this design was to place the responsibility of project implementation, and thus ownership of the project, with the local project teams and *not* with Circle's project team. In this Circle/local law enforcement agency-school partnership, the Circle project team served as advisors to the demonstration sites, providing technical expertise but allowing the local project teams to implement every aspect of the project design. Thus, we hypothesized, by experiencing every aspect of the outcome-oriented performance measures process, the local project teams would be able to replicate the process without or with minimal assistance from an outside research team. This approach tests whether it is feasible for demonstration sites to implement the project and highlights areas that require technical assistance.

---

[22] A few months later, one of those schools, Southern Oaks Middle School, dropped out, but at the same time, Forest Grove Middle School was added as a site when St. Lucie County Sheriff's Department joined the project.

Identifying Outcomes. Customers were asked to broadly identify outcomes that they wanted the SRO to accomplish during the school year. This brainstorming session provided an opportunity for the customers to voice their concerns about school safety issues. Group members were encouraged to offer as many ideas as possible.

Much effort was spent to differentiate between activities/outputs and outcomes. Examples were given to illustrate the difference. A common scenario that the CPOCs presented to clarify the outcome/activity difference was: reducing traffic accidents on school grounds is an "outcome;" increasing the number of traffic tickets written by the SRO is an "activity" or "output." If customers suggested increasing the number of classroom presentations by the SRO as an outcome, the facilitator worked with the customers to delineate an outcome for this activity. The facilitator may have pointed out that although classroom presentations can be helpful because teaching students about the consequences of drug use may help reduce or deter drug use, if doing the presentations was the goal, rather than reducing student drug use, the SRO may not make full use of the resources available. Facilitators often found themselves asking customers, "…and if the SRO did that, what outcome will he/she achieve?" or "…and that will lead to what outcome?"

Proposed outcomes that were extremely broad or all-encompassing were also further refined. Some customers wanted to propose that the SRO reduce crime on the school grounds or reduce violence. These goals are so large that they defeat the purpose of establishing priorities. Customers were asked to set interim goals and narrow the focus to a particular crime or type of violence. Likewise, seemingly unattainable goals were avoided. For example, asking the SRO to eliminate drugs from campus or eliminate gangs from campus set expectations too high and would merely have served to frustrate the SRO, rather than motivate him/her.

Across all sites, the initial listing of desired outcomes was both lengthy and broad in scope. For example, one site initially listed more than 30 desired outcomes. At the conclusion of the brainstorming phase, the group was asked to review the list to determine if any outcomes listed were *not* the *primary* responsibility of the SRO, but rather the primary responsibility of someone else. For example, proposed goals such as reducing tardiness or reducing classroom disruptions were eliminated. While the SRO may improve tardiness by suggesting traffic flow changes to the school hallways or parking lot traffic, or improve student behavior in class through character education, other personnel within the school retain the primary responsibility over these goals, namely teachers and administrators.

Last, the SRO and his/her supervisor were asked to review the list to determine if any of the outcomes were beyond the scope of the SRO program, conflicted with the MOU between the school district and the police department, violated any law or policy, or raised union concerns. Any problems were removed from the list.

Prioritizing Outcomes. Once the broad list of outcomes was identified and vetted, the CPOC led the customers through a "voting" exercise to select the most important

priority outcomes. One challenge occurred when, upon reviewing the results of the vote, customers had difficulty "letting go" of some of the goals/outcomes that were not prioritized. As such, customers sometimes tried to "bundle" several outcomes into a "single" outcome, which invariably proved to be excessively broad and complex. CPOCs counteracted this approach by reminding customers that the reason for prioritizing the goals/outcomes was so that the SRO, with a finite period of time in the school, had clear direction on how to prioritize his/her time and that by listing every possible safety concern as a goal, the result is an overwhelmed SRO with no direction and unreasonable expectations from customers—thus setting him/her up for failure.

Identifying Activities to Accomplish Priority Outcomes. After the priority outcomes were selected, customers identified the activities that the SRO could do to accomplish the priority outcomes. For example, the SRO could educate students on her/his role as an SRO to increase students' understanding of the SRO role. The SRO could conduct presentations to students about penalties for drug and alcohol offenses or about fighting to reduce the prevalence of these offenses. The focus group participants offered many activities that SROs do, or could do, towards accomplishing each identified priority. As with the outcomes, the SRO and supervisor were asked to review and remove any activities that could not be included for legal or policy reasons.

Establishing Potential Data Sources. Lastly, group participants discussed how they would know if the objectives were accomplished, and subsequently which data sources could be used. Student surveys; activity logs; school incident reports and referrals; police calls for service, crime reports, and arrests; and observation were among many of the sources proposed.

Next Steps. The meeting adjourned with action steps for the team leader to collect the prior year's school and police data and for the CPOC to review and recommend refinements to the data sources. The second focus group meeting was scheduled.

Task 3 Results
Logistics. The sites did an excellent job of organizing the focus groups, even when the coordinator was the SRO and he/she felt "like a fish out of water" doing so. Focus groups were held in appropriately sized rooms with appropriate seating arrangements, included refreshments, and focus group members arrived on time and ready to work.

Customers. At the first focus group, SRO customers varied widely by site and included:

- **School principals and assistant principals**
- **Guidance counselors**
- **Deans of students**
- **Teachers**
- **Students**

- **Parents**
- **Law enforcement union representatives**
- Student support center personnel
- School security
- Police Executives and SRO program coordinator
- School secretary or data clerk
- Juvenile probation officers
- Nurses
- Nearby business owners and employees
- Community activists
- Neighborhood residents
- Youth gang program coordinators
- Other community policing officers who worked with the SRO
- SROs in neighboring schools
- School board members
- City council members
- City administrators

Most, if not all sites included the first seven, bolded customers, in addition to the SRO and the SRO supervisor in the first focus group.

Number of Customers in the Focus Groups. The number of customers who participated in the focus groups varied across sites as well, from 10 to 24 participants. In nearly all of the sites, the first focus group meeting was the largest, and focus group attendance gradually decreased through the last focus group session.

Student Involvement. While some sites were initially reluctant to include students, each site included at least one student in at least one focus group during the project. One site actively involved a student in the design, implementation, and analysis of the student and faculty survey instrument, under supervision of a mathematics teacher. Another site had student assistance on data entry. All sites observed that student participants, at both the middle and high school, were consistently knowledgeable and articulate about the nature and scope of school-based problems. Furthermore, student participants, at both the middle and high school level, provided thoughtful strategies about how to effectively implement activities designed to reach youth, especially the youth who were "the problem kids." At the final focus group for each site, student participants, along with other focus group members, advocated the expansion of student participation to include "not just the good students," but also students who are not necessarily the "honor roll" students or the student leaders, but rather, students who have been counseled by the SRO and other students. A further recommendation was to include students of all grades, racial/ethic backgrounds, and type/level of involvement at school. All of these students provide an invaluable perspective to the school-based crime and disorder problems in local schools.

Prioritized Outcomes. The customers across all six sites prioritized four to six outcomes, although due to some unresolved "bundling" problems, as many as ten actual priorities were listed. The most frequently selected outcomes included:

- Reducing fights
- Gang-related outcomes
- Reducing bullying
- Improving trust/rapport between the SRO and others

Activities*.* Proposed activities can be categorized as:

- Educating students/staff/parents/others
- Increasing access to the SRO
- Counseling or mentoring students
- Collaboration with other school personnel
- Running/overseeing programs

Data Sources. The customer groups were very creative about the proposed data sources, recognizing that in some cases no clear source of data would tell them with certainty whether the outcome goal had been accomplished. In many cases, multiple data sources were proposed in an attempt to obtain a diverse perspective on the problem. For example, measuring the number of reported fights via school incident data as well as the number of arrests from police data, or to measure the prevalence of gang activity, one school implemented a student survey and a staff survey. Factors that customers considered when selecting data sources included likelihood that the data existed, ability to collect the data, and cost of collecting the data. For example, one customer group determined that systematic observation and recording of gang behaviors in the hallways would be a good measure of the prevalence of gang activity at school, but determined that the cost of conducting the observation would be too great to make it viable.

Task 4: Measurement Operationalization
At the conclusion of the focus group meeting, and in the weeks and month(s) following, each site attempted to gather samples of the school and police data proposed as data sources to measure success on the prioritized outcomes. The CPOC reviewed the proposed measures, as well as any available data for validity, reliability, and feasibility of collection, with assistance from the statistician consultant.

Hours of discussion ensued about each site's measures and data to ensure that each proposed measure did in fact capture the outcome, whether the proposed data source was reliable over time, the best means of determining the measure, and whether the data was feasible to collect. For example, a proposed measure of the prevalence of bullying was the number of calls from parents to the deans regarding bullying. While this data may provide helpful information, it may be more indicative of a child's willingness to share his/her experience of being bullied and the parent's willingness to confront the school administrators and seek help than the actual prevalence of

bullying. Furthermore, as deans do not routinely keep a telephone log with sufficient detail to capture this data for each occurrence, even if this were a valid measure of bullying, the data was not reliable. Data source recommendations were included in the second focus group. Additionally, a second round of discussions with the statistician consultant was necessary after focus group two to review modifications to the proposed measures and to review and improve survey instruments.

Task 4 Results
Through this dissection of the available data, it quickly became apparent that schools and law enforcement agencies do not routinely collect information about some of the most common crime/disorder concerns. In fact, at nearly all of the pilot schools, data that staff believed was routinely collected and recorded was not actually available. This type of data included custodial logs of vandalism, suspensions for participation in a gang fight, and injuries resulting from fights. Surveys of students were necessary to measure such things as a reduction in gang behaviors, membership, or symbols at school; bullying; drug use, sale, and student knowledge of the consequences of these actions; weapons in school; and unwanted touching, indecent exposure, sexual acts, or inappropriate displays of affection. Furthermore, surveys were the most appropriate means to collect information about school staff's, students', or parents' knowledge of the SRO role; the level of collaboration/trust/rapport between the SRO and others; and student comfort level with reporting offenses to an authority figure. Surveys also were used to approximate the perceived quality of the SROs' efforts/activities.

Sites were very receptive to the necessary adjustments in data sources proposed by the CPOC.

Task 5: Second Focus Group Meeting
One month to several months after the first focus group meeting, the focus group members reconvened. In preparation for this focus group meeting, the CPOC reviewed the police and school data and interviewed each SRO to determine whether any routinely performed activities were not incorporated into the activities recommended to achieve the priorities at that school. Upon listing these activities, the SRO was asked what he/she expects to accomplish by performing those activities (i.e., the outcome). A review of the priorities and proposed activities from focus group one and this discussion formed the basis of the introduction to focus group two. Focus group two was presented as an opportunity to reflect upon the priorities in light of data about the school-related crime and disorder problems and in relation to the function and goals currently adhered to by the SRO(s). At the second focus group meeting, the customers:

- Compared each priority with the school/police data about that priority, if available
- Reviewed police and school data to determine if a particular crime or disorder problem was happening with some frequency and yet was not listed as a priority

- Reviewed the SROs' current activities and whether he/she is currently working on a priority that is not part of the list the group agreed to prioritize and assessed whether that priority should be included
- Built consensus, as a group, on any changes that should be made to the priorities, in light of any of the three sets of data above
- Brainstormed, as needed, on measures to assess, or activities to accomplish, newly established priorities
- Reviewed the recommendations for the measures and data sources and agreed to them
- Assigned tasks and timelines to design a variety of survey instruments to capture pre-and post data, collect baseline data, and develop new or modify existing SRO activity logs to track activities associated with the priority outcomes

Task 5 Results

Refining Priority Outcomes. Across all sites, the final priority outcomes reflect a compromise and consensus among the customers about outcomes that could realistically be accomplished within four to six months and that were the primary responsibility of the SRO (and not someone else). At two sites, customers selected a priority outcome in the hope that by focusing on that outcome, other school-based problems could be impacted. At one site, student customers noted that addressing the drug-related problems in the school may ultimately reduce thefts from lockers and cars (a previously identified priority outcome). At another site, customers felt that by reducing repeat offending and bullying, many other school infractions would be curtailed.

Across all of the demonstration sites, changes were made to the list of priority outcomes based on the additional data or merely a change in the composition of the customer focus group participants. For example, at one school, the priorities shifted from a general nature, such as increasing the number of parents and others who are knowledgeable about the SRO program, to specific problems happening in that school, including bullying and repeat offending. This change happened because the customer group for focus group two was narrowed to only stakeholders to that particular school, rather than including SROs from other schools or beat officers.

At one site, both the school and police data clearly indicated that suspensions and arrests for drug-related offenses were the single most common occurrences in the previous school year. Thus, customers narrowed the priority outcomes to reducing drug use, improving students' knowledge about the health and criminal consequences of drug use, and improving school staff's and faculty's ability to recognize a student under the influence of drugs.

At another site, customers' concerns about fights and assaults were confirmed, and the school data also revealed a surprising number of assaults on staff.

Another site removed "reducing weapons" from the list of priority outcomes after a review of the school data revealed that an extremely small number of weapons were actually reported in the school incident data.

The priority outcomes finalized by the customers of the SROs in the six schools are as follows:

- Four of the six schools identified reducing fights in school.
- Three of six identified reducing bullying.
- Three of six identified reducing gang problems.
- Three of six identified improving or maintaining trust, rapport, and/or collaboration between SROs, students, and school personnel.
- Two of six identified improving students', school staff's, and the community's understanding of SRO roles.
- Two of six identified reducing drug-related incidents in schools.
- Two of six sites identified increasing students' awareness of the consequences of drug use.
- Two of six sites identified reducing neighborhood (surrounding the school) offenses caused by students at the school.
- Other priorities, at one of six schools, included eliminating weapons in school, reducing truancy, reducing thefts in school, increasing the role of the SRO in crisis and safety planning, reducing sexual behavior in school, reducing repeat offending in school, and increasing student reporting of serious offenses in school.

Recommended Activities. Across all the sites, customers recommended an ambitious list of activities ranging from increasing contact with students, teachers, and school staff to classroom presentations (the most often recommended activity), to developing specialized programs such as incentive programs, conflict resolution programs, or bullying prevention programs. Customers recommended the following activities:

- Develop presentations for students, teachers, faculty, and staff (six of six schools).
- Mentor/counsel students (six of six schools).
- Have high visibility, contact, and communication with students, teachers, and faculty, including patrol of school halls and grounds, interacting with students during lunch hours or after school, and email communication with staff (five of six schools).
- Develop new written informational materials, including articles for newsletters or the school newspaper, special flyers or brochures about specific crime and disorder problems, or video and TV spots (five of six schools).
- Attend meetings with faculty to address school crime and disorder problems, including expansion of SRO role in a variety of school-based committees (four of six schools).
- Meet regularly with deans and school administrators to address school crime and disorder problems (four of six schools).

- Conference with parents and/or deliver presentations to parents about school crime and disorder problems (four of six schools).
- Design and implement specialized programs or enhance existing programs such as Crime Stoppers, Police Explorers, peer mediation, conflict resolution, bullying, and gang prevention (four of six schools).
- Participate in after school or extracurricular activities (three of six schools).
- Use incentives to increase student crime reporting (two of six schools).
- Hold meetings with neighborhood groups and community-based organizations with an interest in school safety issues (two of six schools).
- Hold office hours (two of six schools).
- Relocate office to a more convenient location for students to "drop in" (one of six schools).
- Use cameras to monitor student activities (one of six schools).
- Implement problem solving projects with school staff (one of six schools).

Task 6: Baseline Data Collection

Each of the demonstration sites collected baseline data relevant to the priority outcomes. Data collection methods included surveys of students, faculty and school staff, and parents; school incident, referral, suspension, attendance, and disciplinary data; and police calls for service, crime reports, and arrest data. SROs also began keeping activity logs to record their activities.

Surveys. Each site drafted the first version of the necessary surveys. The CPOC, in partnership with the project statistician, modified the surveys to ensure that the questions asked would generate reliable and valid data. The CPOC also provided recommended sample sizes to the sites. The sites then implemented the surveys. In half of the schools, the SRO took on this task, in the other three schools a school administrator assumed the responsibility. All six of the schools utilized a paper-based survey. Two entered the data into a database, and the other six hand-tallied their findings.

Archival Data. In most schools, the SRO worked closely with a school data clerk and the police department to obtain archival data. Teasing the appropriate data out of the databases sometimes proved challenging.

Task 6 Results

Generally, across sites, the baseline data revealed the following:

- Students feel safe at school.
- At least 30% of students know at least one SRO at their school; in one school, 100% of students surveyed reported knowing the SRO.
- Student interaction with the SROs varied widely, from daily to never.
- Students seemed at least moderately comfortable seeking help from the SROs, and those that were asked reported being somewhat comfortable reporting school crime to the SRO.

- Students and staff tended to acknowledge that classroom presentations, patrol, and being accessible to students and staff were helpful activities.
- While fights were a common problem in schools, less than 11% of students were involved in fights at school, across all sites.
- For the sites asking about student perception of gangs, it was perceived as an occasional problem.

In several schools, the baseline data validated the customer's concerns.

- At one school, 10% of students surveyed reported belonging to a gang.
- At one school 16% of students surveyed reported being threatened by another student. At another school, this statistic was 30%.
- Nearly a quarter of students surveyed at one school reported that another student had exposed him/herself to the student while at school.
- At one school, 29% of students surveyed reported that when they were bullied at school, they did not report the experience to school authorities.

Task 7: Implementation Period

Perform Activities. The implementation period for the sites ranged from four to six months, depending on the timing of the baseline data collection and the end of the school year. During the implementation period, the SROs operated with much autonomy to implement some or all of the recommended activities, and other activities as well.

Track Activities. Each SRO was required to keep a log of activities. Prior to this project, nearly all of the SROs had been required to track activities, although for most of those SROs the level of detail recorded and breadth of activities recorded was considerably less than that which was required for the project. For those SROs not accustomed to tracking activities, or whose reports had previously been very limited, this component of the project was one of the most difficult and was met with considerable resistance by both SROs and their supervisors. Some SROs noted that if they tracked every counseling session and every phone conference with a parent (which directly related to the priority outcomes), the SRO would be spending more time recording the activity than actually conducting the activity.

At one school, activity was recorded on a daily basis and transferred to a monthly log. At two other schools, SROs tracked activities on a weekly log. At the remaining three schools, the SROs maintained monthly activity logs. While the CPOC recommended to SROs to use the School COP software as a tool to assist in tracking activities, none of the SROs chose to use the software package for this demonstration project. Activity logs were submitted to the SRO coordinator or to the supervisor, and also to the CPOC.

SRO/SRO Supervisor Teleconferences. In an effort to provide ongoing support and encouragement to the SROs, as a means of checking progress, and to record events that may intervene and impact the priorities or the project, teleconference meetings

between the CPOC, the SRO, and SRO Supervisor were conducted about every two months. During these calls, which generally last 30 to 45 minutes, SROs were asked:

- Which of the priorities he/she had been working on
- What efforts had been made to address the specific priorities
- Whether the SRO perceived that any particular activity or approach was working
- To describe the impact(s) he/she believed had been made on each priority, if any, and the specific observations/intuition that led him/her to have this belief
- Whether any event had happened in the city/county/school/department that may impact the outcomes or prevent, change, or limit his/her ability to conduct activities in support of the outcomes
- Whether the SRO had been unable to conduct an activity that he/she wanted to perform and why not
- To reflect, in hindsight, what he/she would do differently
- With whom they had been collaborating to work towards the priorities, and the nature of the partnership
- Whether the SRO needed anything to continue working on the priorities or working on the project

Supervisors were asked to comment on:
- Whether he/she perceived that an impact has been made on the priorities
- Whether the SRO performed any particularly helpful activities that may have led to an impact on the priorities
- Whether and how his/her supervisory approach has changed towards the SRO
- Why changing the supervisory approach was necessary or why it was not needed
- What, if anything, the supervisor needed to continue supporting the SRO or the project

Task 7 Results
SRO Activities. SROs were not required to conduct all of the recommended activities. As such, the SROs conducted the following activities most often:

- **Mentoring and counseling students**
  This activity appears to be well integrated into the SROs' daily work and was overwhelmingly the task that accounted for most of the SROs' time. Both the SRO activity logs and observations of SROs during the final site visit point to the continuous engagement between SROs and students. For example, at one site, the SROs recorded a total of nearly 500 student-counseling sessions during the implementation period. These sessions do not even reflect the casual, day-to-day interactions that occur between SROs and students as the SROs walk the school halls, monitor the lunchroom, or attend after school activities. At other sites, mentoring and counseling sessions were a "constant" SRO activity—so much so that SROs recorded only the most intensive counseling sessions and considered other conversations/advice to students too innumerable to record.

- **Educating students, teachers, and school staff**
  The SROs, across all the sites, implemented an impressive number of classroom presentations, or presentations for teachers and school staff, and some to parents as well. The topics of the presentations were wide ranging and included such areas as theft prevention, preventing and addressing bullying, health and legal consequences of drug use, identifying gang behaviors and symbols and intervention and prevention strategies, effective decision making, and anger management. Across all sites, the SROs reached an impressive number of students at all grade levels.

- **Conducting parent conferences and being more accessible to parents, students, teachers, and community members**
  SROs across all the sites reported being more visible to students and teachers and conducting numerous parent conferences to address specific student-related problems.

- **An innovative strategy**
  At one site, the SRO collaborated with students to develop a particularly innovative communication strategy to reach both students and faculty about specific school crime and disorder problems. Using a combination of TV/video resources and the existing school announcement systems, the SRO and students developed targeted video programs to educate students and faculty.

Activities Not Implemented. Across all of the demonstration sites, some of the proposed activities were not implemented. Activities not implemented were typically the ones that required SROs to:

- Establish and/or coordinate a new program or school-wide response to a specific problem. Creating new programs may require resources outside the SRO's reach and may require a long-term commitment from other school staff, school administration, the law enforcement agency, or community-based organizations.
- Develop written materials, particularly articles for newsletters or other publications. Developing written materials for varying audiences is not only time consuming, but requires strong skills in the design of appropriate messages and formats. These skills are typically not taught at the law enforcement academy and are not a regular part of an officer's daily routine.

Task 8: Follow-Up Data

Data collection. Final data was collected at the conclusion of the implementation period. As with the baseline data, data collection methods included surveys of students, faculty and school staff, and parents; school incident, referral, suspension, attendance, and disciplinary data; and police calls for service, crime reports, and arrest data.

Surveys. The follow-up surveys were generally a repeat of the baseline survey. Four of the six schools chose to conduct the follow-up surveys electronically. Circle's

Webmaster put the surveys on the Internet and provided access codes to the SRO or school administrator who administered the survey. Feedback on this approach was that the online survey was easier (barring Internet connection challenges at one school that performed the survey during a storm), data analysis was quicker, and data entry errors were eliminated.

Archival Data. When collecting archival data, some school districts also had to re-run some baseline data to reflect changes in the implementation period. Two school districts switched data systems during the project, and these changes influenced the comparability of the baseline to the follow-up data.

Data Analysis. At the majority of sites the CPOC led the data analysis efforts, however, in others the site conducted the analysis. For most sites, the CPOC prepared a summary of the data analysis to be presented at the final site meeting.[23]

Task 8 Results

Fundamentally, this demonstration project attempted to move law enforcement agencies and schools toward a performance evaluation process for their SROs that involves customers and is driven by *outcomes* rather then *activities.* The driving philosophy has been that SROs' activities are the means by which outcomes are accomplished and, in and of themselves, are insufficient measures of performance.

Across the six sites, some of the outcomes showed slight changes, others did not. As we present the cross-site findings of this demonstration project, a few caveats are offered to provide context to the findings:

- The implementation period for the sites was four to six months, which we learned was not enough time to expect much change. While a problem-solving approach may reveal a particularly creative short-term solution, the reality is that a reduction of drug-related incidents may possibly only be seen after several years of targeted education, counseling, and enforcement activities.

- Even when the overall findings for a specific priority outcome reflect "no statistically significant change," some individual measures of outcomes actually show minor improvement or partial success. For example, the increased knowledge of faculty about gang signs and behavior, the increased willingness of students to report crime incidents, or the increase in students' awareness of the health effects of drug use do not reflect reductions in the actual crime problems, but may be interim steps toward the goal. Also, implementing activities that empower students, parents, and school personnel to recognize problems, and facilitate their reporting of problems may even lead to an initial increase in the number of reported incidents. As such, an initial increase may be viewed as a positive finding rather than an indicator of the SROs' failure to resolve the problem.

---

[23] At one site, the data was being finalized as the CPOC was arriving in town for the meeting, so the synopsis was provided verbally instead of in report form.

Each site did have at least one successful priority, despite the limited implementation period. SROs were most successful with priorities that addressed:

- Maintaining high levels of trust/rapport/collaboration with students and staff
- Improving students' understanding of the SRO role
- Raising students' awareness of the consequences of drug use/sales
- Reducing neighborhood offenses by students during school hours
- Reducing inappropriate behaviors of a sexual nature during school hours
- Strengthening the role of the SRO in coordinated crisis/safety response

Below is a synopsis of the findings for the priorities adopted by at least two schools:

Reducing Fights in Schools. Four of six sites identified reducing fights in schools as a priority outcome. Across all sites, either multiple measures did not consistently show a change or **no statistically significant change** was evident between the baseline and final data. However, individual measures reflect that:

- At one site, referrals (to school administration) for fighting among a cohort of students **decreased** 43 percent during the implementation period; disorderly conduct referrals **decreased** 40 percent; and student self reports of fighting and being a victim of a fight also **slightly decreased.**
- At one site, crime reports for simple assault on school grounds **decreased** 29 percent, while the school population decreased only by 9 percent.
- At one site, police data indicates that reported incidents of assault or battery involving students on campus **decreased** 47 percent**.**

Reducing Bullying in School. Three sites identified reducing bullying as a priority. Across all sites, there was **no statistically significant reduction in bullying.** Individual measures reflect:

- At one site, students' knowledge about how to handle bullying **increased** with 55% of students reporting that they "learned something new" about what to do if they are bullied.
- At one site, student self reports of being a victim of bullying, either being called bad names or being threatened by another student, **increased.**
- At one site, student self reports of "being called bad names" was **reduced** 9 percent.
- Anecdotal information from one demonstration site reveals that a student credited the SRO with helping her stop another student from bullying her. In another instance, the SRO reported that he witnessed students speak out against other students who were "picking on an outcast student."

Reducing Gang Behavior in School. Three sites selected reducing gang behavior, including assaults based on ethnicity, race, affiliations, the showing of gang colors, graffiti symbols, hand signs, claiming territory, and recruiting gang members. Across sites, the findings are either **inconclusive** (due to insufficient follow-up data) or

reflect **no statistically significant change** in gang behavior in the demonstration site schools. However, individual measures reflect:

- At one site, students' observations of gang-related fights **decreased** from the previous year; 40 percent of students reported never observing a gang-related fight this year versus 16 percent of students reporting never observing a gang-related fight in the previous school year.
- The majority of staff at one site observed **fewer occurrences** of students showing gang colors, tagging on school property, and gang symbols on personal property.
- At one site, staff indicated a **slight decrease** in their perceptions of the scope of gang activities in the school.
- At one site, parental knowledge and awareness of gang behavior **increased.**
- At one site, school staff knowledge and awareness of gangs **significantly increased**.

Improve or Maintain High Levels of Trust and Relationships Between SROs and Students and/or School Personnel. Three of six sites identified improving trust and relationships with the SROs as a priority. Across sites, there was **no statistically significant change** in the reported trust/relationship between the SROs and school personnel. **Rather, school staff had strong existing relationships with their SROs, and these relationships remained collaborative throughout the implementation period.**

With respect to students, the findings at one school were inconclusive due to the low number of respondents. Excluding those findings, **students reported being more comfortable** approaching the SROs to report a neighborhood crime and for assistance other than reporting a crime. While no statistically significant change was measured on students' comfort reporting a crime on campus, three-quarters of students reported that they were at least somewhat comfortable doing so.

Improving the Understanding of the Role of SROs Among Students and School Personnel. Two sites selected improving the understanding of the role of SROs as a priority. Across sites, students' understanding of the SROs' role as well as students' understanding of the types of problems/incidents that should be reported to the SROs **increased.** In addition, at one site, student interaction with the SRO **increased significantly** after the implementation period and students' favorable ratings of the SRO's classroom presentations (which included a discussion of the SRO role) **increased significantly**.

Similarly, school personnel knowledge of SRO services and role **increased**, with one-quarter of school staff at one site reporting that they "learned something new" about the SRO role.

Reducing Drug-Related Violations in School. Two demonstration sites sought to reduce drug-related violations, including possession and sale of drugs, as well as

possession of drug paraphernalia. At one site, student self reports of both alcohol use and drug use or sale **decreased slightly, but not statistically significantly**.

Both sites experienced an **increase**, rather than a decrease, in reported drug violations and one site reported an **increase** in referrals (to school administration) of alcohol and tobacco violations during the implementation period. One may hypothesize that these initial increases are the expected initial response to considerable time spent educating both school personnel and students about the signs and symptoms of drug use and encouraging both school personnel and students to report suspicious, drug-related behavior so that the SRO and school administration could help students. We anticipated that the increased educational focus might, in fact, increase the reporting of drug-related incidents both from school personnel and students.

Increasing Students' Awareness of the Health and Criminal Consequences of Drug Use or Sales. Two demonstration sites identified increasing student awareness about the short and long-term health and criminal consequences of drug use/sales. Across sites, students' knowledge of the consequences of drug use **increased**.

Students at one site reported that they learned more about the following consequences of drug use during the implementation period:

- 77% reported learning more about the health effects of drug use
- 70% reported learning more about the effects of drug use on their grades
- 69% reported learning more about the effect of drugs on their future careers
- 60% reported learning more about the impact drugs can have on their mood, their friends, and family
- 55% reported learning more about the legal consequences of drug use/sales

Additionally, at one site students' reported a **significant increase** in their knowledge of how to report drug use by other students.

Finally, at one site, the school personnel reported a **significant increase** in their awareness of the signs and symptoms of drug use among students.

Reducing Neighborhood Offenses Committed by Students. Two demonstrations identified reducing neighborhood crime, committed by students, as a priority. The data in both sites could not be manipulated to **distinguish offenses attributable to students**. However, offenses, believed by the police to most likely be youth related and occurring within the immediate neighborhood during school hours, were assessed to approximate this priority. **No statistically significant change** occurred across the offenses during the implementation period. Individual measures reveal:

- Although not statistically significant, the number of crime reports for the selected offenses was slightly reduced.

- Although not statistically significant, calls for service for targeted offenses decreased, as did the proportion of the targeted calls for service out of all calls for service.
- At one site, crime reports for simple assaults decreased by 35 percent. Unfortunately, motor vehicle thefts increased fourfold.

While few outcomes resulted in statistically significant improvements, the project team did not conclude that the process or efforts put forth were ineffective. Rather, SROs learned which approaches must be changed in the future to more effectively address the crime problems, SRO supervisors better understood the challenges facing the SROs, schools better understood the crime and disorder issues and how they were being addressed, and the Circle project staff learned how to improve upon the process, including setting manageable goals and considering extenuating factors impacting those goals.

Task 9: Final Site Visit and Focus Group 3

After the implementation period had concluded and follow-up data had been collected and analyzed, the CPOCs returned to each site to present the results to the customer group and solicit their feedback on the outcome-oriented SRO performance measures process.

Shadowing the SRO. As part of the final site visit, the CPOCs "shadowed" the SROs during a one and one-half day on-site visit, in order to observe the scope of activities that the SROs perform during a "typical" day. SROs were shadowed two to four hours, depending on the number of SROs serving a particular school.

Individual Interviews. The CPOCs individually interviewed the SRO, SRO Supervisor, and customers to garner their feedback on the outcome-oriented SRO performance measures process, the priorities, activities, and data sources selected. Interviewees were asked:

- What they thought of the process, generally
- Whether the outcomes selected as goals for the SRO were actually reflective of the roles that customers expected the SRO to have at school
- What were the positive and negative aspects of the process
- What concerns interviewees have about the process if it were to be implemented regularly
- Whether having only one or multiple SROs (depending on the school) working on the priorities seemed like an advantage or disadvantage to the SRO performance measures process
- Whether anything went wrong or did not happen as planned
- Whether the interviewees perceived any changes to the outcome priorities (before viewing any of the data findings)
- What are the best uses for the process (e.g., personal development, reward/punishment)
- Recommendations for improving the process

- Factors that other schools and law enforcement agencies should consider when replicating the process

SROs and their supervisors were asked additional questions, including:

- Whether the outcomes were used as a guide to help prioritize the SRO's time
- Whether having established outcome priorities resulted in any changes to the SRO's activities
- Impressions about whether the activities undertaken impacted the outcomes
- The estimated level of effort that each SRO undertook to address each outcome
- Whether any benefits resulted from participating in the new performance evaluation process and the nature of those benefits
- Whether the SROs would willingly participate in the process if repeated again next school year

The SRO and SRO supervisors were also presented with the findings in advance of the focus group to solicit their impressions and reactions, as well to garner any clarification or explanations that may be presented to the focus group. The SRO and SRO supervisors were also provided officer-specific findings, when available, which were not provided to the larger customer group. The primary question asked about data findings during the interviews was whether the SRO or supervisor perceived that the data actually captured what he/she believed happened with the outcomes.

Focus Group. The final focus group was reconvened with the same customers, SRO(s), and SRO Supervisor(s) to:

- Present the outcome goal findings
- Present the actual activities conducted by each SRO for each outcome versus those activities that were recommended
- Discuss the findings and whether the customers believed that the findings represented what really had occurred for each priority outcome or any explanations they may offer for the findings
- Obtain general reactions to the SRO performance process
- Discuss what, if anything, they have gained from participation in the process
- Present next steps for the project

As was previously mentioned, participation in the final focus group meeting was the lowest of the three groups in nearly all of the sites, ranging from 5 to 12 participants.

Results of Task 9
Shadowing the SRO. Across sites, SROs were greeted by and frequently interacted with students, teachers, staff, and school administrators as they patrolled. During patrol, one SRO popped into classrooms. In one classroom, the science teacher showed the SRO two experiments—the SRO took an active role in both. One experiment included "shooting" air across the room and seeing the effects. The students enjoyed the show. Some SROs also patrol the neighborhood or campus

grounds on foot, by bike, in a patrol car, or even via golf cart, chatting with students as they passed or questioning students seen outside of the school building or grounds.

One SRO passing through the school reception area was stopped by a student for advice on his speeding ticket, which he firmly believed was a mistake—that the officer had meant to clock another car. "What was he driving?" asked the SRO. "A motorcycle," responded the student. "They have the most accurate equipment out there for extremely long distances," the SRO then replied. The student continued to explain the situation and began drawing the position and direction of the cars. The SRO patiently listened to and answered his questions about his legal options and explained details about his option of going to court.

Another student sought the same SRO's help because the student, who was involved in an accident with another student in the parking lot, was trying to deal with the incident without involving insurance companies. The student who was hit, who originally agreed to privately settle, was now concerned because the boy had not paid him. The SRO spoke to the liable driver and filed a report.

Office hours were filled with counseling appointments with students, parent teleconferences, an opportunity to talk with a guidance counselor about a rumored incident between two students, assisting a dean to handle a report of inappropriate touching by a student, a brief discussion with the Principal about the upcoming graduation activities, and an opportunity to sign the yearbooks of seniors who walk in the office unannounced.

Stepping into the lunchroom promised to be an unending conversation with students, congratulating some students on their upcoming graduation or recent accomplishments, or encouraging others to "try out" for one of the many activities next school year. Also, a traffic citation for speeding out of the school parking lot may be more common than not in the SRO's lunchtime activity.

We observed an SRO writing and then videotaping the next morning's announcements and taking incident reports from student.

Several SROs directed traffic for the student arrival/departure or merely supervised the bus stop area and school exits.

Individual Interviews and Focus Group. The individual interviews encouraged customers, SROs, and SRO supervisors to be completely candid. During the focus group, some of the same issues discussed during individual interviews were addressed. As such, the findings from both are combined.

▪ **Customer input was well received.**
Customers enjoyed being a part of the process, and they appreciated having a voice. In fact, participants would have preferred more involvement by certain customers, especially students (although students missing class was a challenge) and school staff

involvement, such as custodian and food service staff. Customers reinforced that one parent or one student cannot represent all parents or all students. SROs and police executives appreciated the opportunity to hear customer expectations and the chance to temper them, as needed, through the dialogue at the focus groups. Customers and even many SRO supervisors better understood the SRO role in the school as a result of their participation in the process.

- **SRO supervisors benefited from the process.**

The process gave SROs and SRO supervisors more face-to-face time than they normally experience. SRO supervisors don't often know what SROs do, nor do they hear about their accomplishments; the process gave them information that they don't normally have. An improvement recommendation was to involve supervisors more fully in the process.

- **Selected priority outcomes were appropriate to the SRO role.**

Focus group participants agreed that the priority outcomes were appropriate for the SRO role, with few exceptions—perhaps truancy. Some SROs reported that having the priorities gave them a focus and directed their activities; others did not change their activities as a result of the process. Several SROs reported that the process led to working on priorities that without the process would not have been prioritized. This was seen as an important consequence of the process. SRO supervisors voiced, however, that the priorities alone are insufficient as a performance evaluation tool.

- **Setting the appropriate number and scope of priorities is critical to success.**

Some sites felt that they had too many priorities and that three, or at most four, priority outcomes would be more ideal. The appropriate number may vary depending on the number of SROs in a school. Furthermore, some of the priorities remained fairly broad and customers, in hindsight, suggested narrowing them. For example, instead of reducing repeat offending among students, the priority could be to reduce the number of students repeatedly harassing others or attempting to fight. With the exception of one person, everyone agreed that SROs must be given more time to generate the outcomes—at least one school year, if not two.

- **While important and helpful, tracking activities was burdensome to SROs.**

Most SROs found detailed activity tracking to be time consuming, although they also acknowledged the utility of doing so. For several SROs who had responsibility to complete activity logs prior to the project, the project motivated them to complete the logs despite struggling to do so prior to the project. SROs expressed some concern that many of the recommended activities rely on others to help and that the willingness and availability of others could impact the SRO's evaluation.

- **Stability of the school and law enforcement staff makes the process smoother.**

When core staff left the school (SROs, SRO supervisors, school administrators) and the replacement was not brought quickly up to speed with the project, it was a detriment to the effort. Those sites that experienced many of these changes thought that stability and consistency would have made the process easier and more effective.

In schools where communication between SROs and school administrators was not already good, this process helped increase that communication.

- **Sites wanted more communication with and involvement of customers.**
Customers thought the process was well organized and delivered. Customers would have liked more detail about the process up front—how the data will be used and the impact of the findings on the SRO(s). One recommendation was to meet as a group to discuss the findings of the baseline data collection, especially any student/staff surveys to reassess approach and priorities. Customers did not feel involved during the implementation period, but expressed an interest in being involved. Customers would have liked more communication/feedback during the implementation period.

- **The outcome measures were good, but leave some room for improvement.**
One concern about presenting the outcome data was that the data involved interpretation and that some of that interpretation could be subjective. Most customers agreed that the outcome data was a good approximation and reflective of what was happening with the priority outcomes. Some SROs and supervisors mentioned that the outcome data does not capture the little successes—helping individual students, etc. For gang prevalence, a more accurate measurement would have been an observation process.

- **Customers saw value in replicating the process.**
Customers agreed that the process emphasized the importance of having SROs in their school. The majority of focus group participants believed that the school/law enforcement agency could conduct this process without the assistance from an outside entity such as Circle. Those that voiced doubt expressed concerns about maintaining the commitment, motivation, and focus or doing the evaluation of the measures.

Task 10: Final All-Sites Meeting
A final, two-day meeting of the demonstration sites was held at Circle's Vienna, Virginia office. Each school was asked to send the SROs, the SRO supervisor, and the school principal or vice principal. With few exceptions, everyone was able to attend. In addition to representatives of the demonstration sites, meeting attendees included the Circle project team, the COPS Project Officer, and a Program Officer from the National Institute of Justice.

The meeting provided an opportunity for the sites to reflect on the many aspects of the project, including:

- Their impressions of the process, the value of the process, and the most/least helpful components of the process
- Challenges experienced during implementation and their solutions

- Issues related to using this process as a performance tool, including comparisons to other performance processes
- The impact of this process on the nature of supervision
- The modifications they would make to the process
- Recommendations for products that would be most helpful to law enforcement agencies and schools

For much of the meeting, attendees discussed these issues in small groups, dividing SROs into one group, school administrators in another, and SRO supervisors into a third group, to solicit candid feedback from these varied perspectives.

Task 10 Results
SROs
- ***Customer Involvement.*** SROs commented that they liked hearing from and getting to know their customer base. Some mentioned that they liked partnering with their customers. Furthermore, they appreciated hearing the expectations of their customers.
- ***Data and Statistics.*** Using existing school and police data to develop priority outcomes was a logical way to focus on the issues of greatest importance in the school. This grounded players in being "all on the same page" about what needed to be accomplished.
- ***Being evaluated by people with whom they work.*** SROs liked being evaluated by people who see their work on a daily basis. For most SROs, a supervisor is not present enough to know what the SRO "really does" in the day.
- ***Direction and Goals.*** For many SROs, this project gave them direction and goals to work towards achieving. Expectations and priorities for activities and accomplishments were clearly outlined, which the SROs valued.

Supervisor
- ***A Performance System that Means Something.*** This process demonstrates to supervisors the importance of having a performance evaluation system that "means something" and is grounded in the needs of the school community and role of the SRO. Supervisors benefited from this project by receiving detailed data and statistics about their SROs' school(s) and SROs' activities.
- ***Information about the SRO.*** Activity reports produced detailed information about what their SROs' activities and accomplishments were. Supervisors benefited by having this information outlined and presented to them on a regular basis.
- ***Recruitment of SROs.*** The process helped to inform future recruitment of SROs—"we got a better sense of what is expected of an SRO and important qualities necessary for success to guide us as we search for new SROs."

School Administration
- ***Data and Information.*** By using existing school and police data to develop priority outcomes, a practical focus was placed on the issues of greatest importance to the school. The statistics revealed safety issues that had previously

been overlooked. By using information gathered, a strategic approach was developed for how the SRO should spend his/her time to reduce school problems.
- ▪ ***Providing Input.*** School administrators appreciated the opportunity to provide input in the SROs' activities and priorities, and ultimately on their performance.
- ▪ ***Better understanding of SRO role.*** The project clarified the role and expectations of the SRO. This improved working relations between the SRO and customers.

Implementation Challenges, Solutions, and Lessons Learned

Inherent to the successful implementation of this demonstration project are the following elements:

- ▪ Vocal support from law enforcement and school executives
- ▪ Collaboration between the law enforcement agency and the school
- ▪ A motivated leader to coordinate the project
- ▪ Customers who are direct stakeholders of the school's safety and who are willing to commit to the project for its duration
- ▪ Appropriate number and scope of project goals
- ▪ Access to school and law enforcement data and expertise in data collection and analysis
- ▪ Communication strategies to ensure that project goals and processes are effectively communicated
- ▪ A process to account for extenuating circumstances

Many of these elements presented a set of challenges throughout the course of the 1.5 years that sites participated in this process. These challenges are described below, along with solutions implemented and lessons learned from them.

The Law Enforcement Agency and the School Must Collaborate
Challenge: Poor relationships between the police department and school impact who is involved in the process, the quality of the data, how information is used and shared, and the types of activity that can be implemented.

Solution: This process can be seen as a new opportunity to revise and redefine an existing relationship. It is important that relationship strains are acknowledged and addressed, and ultimately cast aside or contained for this effort to be successful. For this effort to be a success, parties must be willing to put aside their differences and agree how the process will work, especially in terms of communication and data sharing. Establish from the beginning the level of data that will be shared, with whom, and when it will be shared.

A Motivated Coordinator Must Lead the Effort
Challenge: Without an individual to take ownership and coordinate all of the activities of the effort, the project will falter, because tasks will not be completed and important timelines will not be met.

Solution: At most demonstration sites, the project leader was the SRO or school administrator. The project leader must be a resourceful person skilled in leadership and management of projects and able to delegate activities effectively. The leader must buy into the project, and have a good working relationship with the law enforcement and school executives supporting the project, as well as with team members. The leader must be self-motivated and able to motivate others. For the pilot effort, the CPOC encouraged the leader and helped him/her to stay course. For future efforts an appropriate team leader is likely to be the SRO supervisor and/or the school administrator.

Customers Must Be Direct Stakeholders in The School's Safety

Challenge: Some sites selected too many customers who did not have an immediate stake in defining the school safety priorities, such as other SROs from nearby schools, other community policing officers, probation officers, or broad community representatives. Other sites selected too many stakeholders from the police department, leaving the group of customers unbalanced and not school-specific. Some sites selected simply far too many customers to participate in the groups. Furthermore, too many focus group members, no matter who they are, can make facilitating the group unwieldy and impact the groups' rate of progress.

Solution: For the focus group, select 8 to15 customers who are direct stakeholders in the school' safety. In addition to the SRO and SRO supervisor, the school staff appreciates the participation of a police command staff member, if he/she is available, but one representative would meet this need. Select customers primarily from the school, including parents, students, community members, and other police representatives as appropriate.

Challenge: Several sites lacked sufficient student involvement. Students are the SRO's largest customer base. Some SROs and administrators were hesitant to include students because they were unsure that students could contribute to the project in a meaningful way based on their perceived maturity levels. Others were reluctant to pull students out of class. Attrition throughout the project was the result of students graduating or changing schools. Also, the tendency to include the oldest, honor role students did not provide diverse enough representation from the customer base.

Solution: Multiple students of various grade levels, races/ethnicity, both genders, and school activities should be included in the focus group. Some schools recommend having a smaller pre-focus group of students who could select the priorities that they found most important, and then have one or two student representatives attend the larger focus group to advocate for their selections.

Appropriate Number and Scope of Project Goals Is Necessary To Promote Success

Challenge: As previously mentioned, selecting too many priorities will overwhelm the SRO(s) and diminish the efforts spent on any one of the priorities. For example, reducing drug use and reducing alcohol were noted as two priorities in the first focus

group, but by the second they had been combined into one priority of reducing drug and alcohol use.

Solution: While there are many safety priorities that must be considered under the SROs purview, this process recommends selecting a manageable number of outcomes, such as three or four, to achieve within one school year and making certain that the outcomes can be achieved within one school year. For example, instead of trying to reduce theft in the whole school, we recommend that sites use school data to determine what type of specific theft should be reduced (locker room theft, thefts from school lockers, etc.). This will enable the SRO to focus on a few manageable target outcomes.

Collecting and Analyzing School, Police, and Project Data Requires Creativity and Some Help from Others

Challenge: School and police data can be difficult to understand and correctly obtain. Schools in the pilot effort changed incident recording systems and categories of incidents between baseline data collection and follow-up. Police data was voluminous, and only an expert could query out the data needed.

Solution: The definition of and recording processes of school incidents and crimes must be clearly understood. Developing a working relationship with the school discipline administrator, the school secretary that handles school incident data, and the crime analyst from the law enforcement agency is critical for understanding and collecting school data. These individuals should participate in each focus group. Bringing school incident or referral forms to the first focus group may also save time.

Challenge: Some priority outcomes, such as reducing gang activity or bullying, may not be captured through routine data sources. In fact, capturing the true impact on these and other issues may prove elusive.

Solution: Consider using creative means, such as surveys or observation, to collect data. For example, student surveys may be implemented to measure student self-reports of victimization or offending. If a school or SRO does not have the necessary research skills on site to develop surveys, the police department or school district is likely to employ someone with these skills. Universities and research consultants are other resources. Recognize that you will be estimating the prevalence of bullying or gang activity or other difficult to measure issues and consider collecting multiple sources of data about the same issue to provide a more complete picture of the problem.

Challenge: SROs expressed concern over the amount of time required to complete activity logs.

Solution: Keep the demands for completing activity logs realistic. Many SROs are already required to account for their activities through weekly or monthly reports. With SRO supervisor involvement, build upon these existing reports. Understand that

the SRO may not be able to account for every minute of the day, and agree upon the level of detail expected. Encourage the SRO to regularly maintain the activity logs, as it can be difficult to account for activities that took place weeks earlier. It should be recognized and understood that due to a variety of circumstances that may arise, SROs may not be able to accomplish all the activities that were initially suggested.

Challenge: While recording the types and number of activities the SRO performs is easy to do, capturing the quality of those efforts—how well it was done—poses a considerable challenge.

Solution: Some approaches used by the demonstration sites include interviews with students who had been mentored, conversations with supervisors and others at school that observe and interact with the SRO, implementing training evaluations, asking questions during the baseline, and follow-up student or staff surveys.

Effective Communication Strategies Will Sustain Momentum and Ease Concerns

Challenge: The project purpose was explained extensively to project teams and sites in the orientation meeting, in Focus Group 1 and 2, and during other opportunities throughout the project. However, many members of the focus group continuously expressed confusion and concern over the project purpose. Additionally, a common misunderstanding by focus group members and SROs themselves was the possibility of a hidden agenda by tracking the SRO's activities.

Solution: There was no hidden agenda by tracking the SROs activities. Thus, it was critical that the CPOC clarify the purpose consistently throughout the duration of the project and emphasize that this project is to help improve the SRO's performance by focusing on meaningful activities. The customer involvement part of this process can be intimidating for the SRO, so it is imperative that the SRO and customers understand and feel comfortable with the purpose of the SRO role in the school and the project.

Challenge: Throughout any project it can be a challenge to maintain the enthusiasm level experienced at the project start. Failure to maintain enthusiasm can lead to attrition and stalled progress in reaching project goals or completing the project.

Solution: To create and maintain enthusiasm, consistent communication and involvement of all parties is imperative. In addition to the focus group meetings, interim meetings every few months during the implementation period to discuss progress, brainstorm new activities, work on a priority, and celebrate accomplishments can help maintain enthusiasm for the project. One solution Circle implemented was a project newsletter.

Acknowledge Extenuating Circumstances Will Naturally Occur and Adapt

Challenge: Throughout the project each site experienced extenuating circumstances that may have impacted the outcomes and the ability of SROs to implement activities. For example, several months into the project, one school began operating as a closed-campus, prohibiting students to leave for lunch during the school day, and this change likely reduced neighborhood crime during the school day. Another school moved the freshman to a different building—a Freshman Center, adding more work for the SRO. Still other sites experienced changes in project staff—changes in the SRO's supervisor, SRO changes, and school administrator changes.

Solution: These changes are inevitable, and it is difficult to measure exactly how they impact the priorities. It is important to recognize such events and record them, but to not be stalled or discouraged by them. Turnover seems inevitable when working with schools and police departments, as employees are promoted and move frequently. When there is staff turnover, if possible, have the staff who is leaving train or brief his/her replacement to ensure that the new person understands and is willing to undertake his/her role on the project. If the newcomer is the SRO, the departing SRO should introduce the replacement SRO to school staff and explain each person's role in the project. The project leader and/or the supervisor should explain the purpose of the project and allay any concerns about using the outcomes as a performance tool. Furthermore, follow-up data collection will have to distinguish between the timeframe under the former versus replacement SRO. For example, specific questions about an SRO's helpfulness or the quality of their efforts to conduct training should be asked for the former and for the replacement SRO.

When issues and challenges arose during the course of the pilot, sites and Circle team members simply had to be flexible, recognize that these issues are bound to arise and that they may be viewed as new opportunities to mold the project to fit occurrences of the real world.

Implications of the Findings: What Does This Mean For SROs, SRO Supervisors, Schools, and Law Enforcement Generally?

The demonstration project implemented in six schools across the Nation sought to determine whether a process involving SROs' customers in setting school safety outcome priorities, measuring the SROs' success at achieving those outcomes, and documenting the efforts put forth by the SROs to achieve them, within a performance evaluation, is feasible to implement. Secondly, participating sites were asked whether the new process is an improvement over the systems currently used to evaluate SROs.

Is This Process Feasible to Implement?

Yes. However, we also learned that the pilot process is not easy, and it is time-intensive. Other schools and law enforcement agencies must weigh the benefits against the time and effort commitment that this process requires. The process will

work best in sites where community policing is practiced and highly valued. The outcome-oriented performance assessment process, in its entirety, will not succeed without:

- Collaboration between the law enforcement agency and the school
- Support from the executives of the law enforcement agency and school
- A leader to coordinate the project
- SROs who are open to input and recommendations from their customers and who are willing to accept their priorities
- School administrators who are willing to confront and candidly share information about school crime and disorder problems with parents, students, law enforcement, and other school personnel
- Supervisors that place value on setting goals for the SRO, supporting and mentoring the SRO on those goals, and holding SROs accountable to those goals
- Customers who are willing to commit to the project for the duration of the project
- A facilitator to help the group set an appropriate number of goals with a reasonable scope, given the school year limitations
- Access to school and law enforcement data and expertise in data collection and analysis
- Communication strategies to ensure that project goals and processes are effectively communicated

Some of the pilot sites claimed that the process would integrate well with the school planning already routinely conducted before the beginning of each school year, and as such, makes the efforts required reasonable. To assist other law enforcement agencies that may be interested in replicating the process, Circle has published, *SRO Performance Evaluation: A Guide To Getting Results.* The Guide provides step-by-step instructions and includes tips, tools, and things to consider when implementing the outcome-oriented, SRO performance evaluation process.

Is This Process A Viable Alternative to Traditional SRO Performance Evaluation Systems?

Yes. Not only can the outcome-oriented, customer-involved SRO performance process serve as a performance evaluation process, according to the six demonstration sites, it is generally an improvement over the current systems used to measure SRO performance. Implementing the process in the six schools confirmed that:

- SROs are performing different functions than patrol officers
- Because SROs are performing different functions than patrol officers, they should be assessed differently
- Customers should participate in SRO performance evaluation
- Using outcome goals within a performance evaluation process is reasonable and appropriate

The demonstration project was grounded in these assumptions, and the project design tested the validity of the assumptions in the six schools. Each one is addressed below.

Are SROs Performing Distinctly Different Functions for Law Enforcement Agencies Than Patrol Officers/Deputies or Any Other Unit Within the Department?

Yes. Under this effort, SROs' activities included many things that other law enforcement officers within their agency do not conduct. In fact, one newly appointed SRO on the project, who had spent seven years on patrol before being assigned as the SRO, acknowledged that upon reviewing the priorities and activities provided by the focus groups, "I did not think any of that is what I am supposed to do." SROs that participated in this project spent much of their time being proactive and focused on prevention, rather than only responding to calls for service. A major part of the SROs' day was spent getting to know students and staff on a personal level, mentoring those with problems, lecturing and conducting classroom presentations on a variety of topics, and collaborating with school staff.

Since SROs Perform Different Functions And Activities Than Their Patrol Counterparts, Should A Different Benchmark Be Used to Assess and Promote Their Success in the Job?

Yes. While some standards, such as punctuality, accuracy, and knowledge of laws may apply to all law enforcement personnel and in departments implementing community policing, additional measures may overlap. The SRO's job still differs, and SROs and their supervisors, as well as the law enforcement executives on this project, all agreed that the benchmarks or measures must differ as well. One of the SROs on the project provided an illustrative example. His evaluation form rates him on his responsiveness to police calls on the radio. For a patrol officer, this is critical. While this SRO's supervisor, school personnel, and even other SRO counterparts praise him as a wonderful SRO, he is rated poorly on the current evaluation form for being unresponsive on the radio. Why is he unresponsive on the radio? CPOC staff witnessed firsthand that neither incoming calls nor outgoing calls are transmitted through the school's cinderblock exterior. If a call comes through and he hears it, in order to respond, the SRO sticks his radio and head out of the school window or exits the building. A different SRO's supervisor concurred that SRO's should not be held to the same standards as patrol officers. He finds himself marking "Did not observe" on evaluation forms for SROs for categories that really simply "Do not apply." However, the grading system does not allow for functions not to apply.

Should Customers Be Involved In Setting the SRO's Priorities?

Yes. Involving a broad range of students, parents, school personnel, and community-based customers offered a more diverse and holistic perspective of the school safety concerns at the school, cultivated potential partners in addressing school safety problems, provided the SROs with a clear understanding of the expectations of their customers, and provided an opportunity for the SROs to teach their customers the role of the SRO at school. SROs, SRO supervisors, and the customers themselves spoke most highly of this component of the SRO performance evaluation process, above all others. Customers especially welcomed the opportunity to have a voice and be heard. School personnel gained perspectives, especially from students, which they previously had not considered. SROs felt validated that others now understood the

importance and breadth of their role in keeping schools safe. Supervisors interacted more with the school administrators and gained a better understanding of the SRO's work environment.

Should the Goals That Are Set for SROs Be Outcome Goals, Rather Than Activity Goals?

Maybe. SROs, their supervisors, and school administrators agreed that setting outcome goals and measuring success on them is helpful and important to the safety of the school. Furthermore, upon discussing how other school personnel are evaluated, it was learned that many of the schools on the project are implementing outcome or goal-oriented performance evaluation for teachers and administrators, even including student achievement via test scores. So, holding SRO's accountable to outcomes is consistent with how others working in the schools are evaluated. Setting goals for the SRO to work towards, whether or not they are fully achieved, provides a focus and added meaning to the SRO's efforts. If the goals are not fully achieved, this provides impetus for changing the approach being used to address the problem.

However, SROs and their supervisors were less inclined to wholeheartedly embrace holding SROs accountable to outcomes as a component of the SRO performance evaluation. Concerns centered on the fact that SROs must collaborate with others to accomplish the outcomes and therefore that SROs are not wholly responsible for achieving the outcome. Also, they contend, the quality and amount of effort put forth by the SRO to try to achieve the outcome should not be diminished or overlooked.

Taking these things into consideration, an evaluation system that incorporates outcomes, but accounts for partial responsibility and acknowledges effort, was proposed by the group and is outlined below.

Under the proposed system, the following must be established and/or agreed upon prior to the SRO implementing the activities to address the outcomes:

- The outcomes to be included.
- How important each outcome is compared to the others, and therefore, how much weight to assign each outcome—adding to 100%.
- The amount of contribution that the SRO can make towards the outcome, compared to others (e.g., teachers, parents, deans).

To determine the scale for the performance evaluation, the degree of importance is multiplied by the percentage of influence. The example below illustrates the process:

Table 4

Priority Outcome	Assigned Degree of Importance	Perceived % of Influence by SRO	Points Allocated to the Achievement of the Outcome
Thefts in the locker room	20	65%	20 X .65 = 13
Fights during lunch	30	80%	30 X .80 = 24
Bullying of 6th graders	40	50%	40 X .50 = 20
Knowledge of drug use consequences	10	90%	10 X .90 = 9
TOTAL	100		66 possible points

After the final customer meeting for the school year, the SRO and his/her supervisor should note whether the SRO achieved each outcome, achieved partial success, or whether there was no change or the outcome worsened. Each of these levels of accomplishment should be assigned a percentage value to specify the proportion of points that will be achieved out of the possible points for that outcome. A possible scale is offered in Table 5. Any 100% scale can be developed for this purpose. In this case, gaining 100% of the points necessitates achieving the outcome. If partial success is achieved, this is still a substantial accomplishment, so 80% is awarded. Because maintaining status quo may not require much influence by the SRO, no change is awarded 60% of the points. When the outcome worsens, despite the SRO efforts, on this scale, no points are awarded.

Table 5

Outcome Finding	% of Points to Award for Outcome Achievement
Achieved outcome	100%
Partially achieved the outcome	80%
No change on the outcome	60%
Outcome changes for the worse	0%

Continuing with the example, Table 6 summarizes the results of the outcome.

Table 6

Priority Outcome	Result	Finding	% Points Awarded
Thefts in the locker room	Number of thefts and value of items stolen did not change	No change	60%
Fights during lunch	Number of fights reduced by 5%	Outcome achieved	100%
Bullying of 6th graders	No change in the number of sixth grade bullying victims but sixth graders reported an increased understanding of what to do if someone bullies them	Partial success	80%
Knowledge of drug use consequences	Students reported an increased understanding of the health consequences of using drugs	Outcome achieved	100%

Next, assess the level of effort that the SRO put forth to work on each outcome. The supervisor, SRO and SRO supervisor together, or the customer group may provide input on this evaluation. Because the emphasis of this process is on getting results, the "bonus points" to be awarded for effort are minimal. Although the scales offered here are merely illustrations, law enforcement agencies are cautioned that granting too many points for effort diminishes the emphasis of the evaluation on achieving results.

Table 7 offers a possible breakdown for level of effort. These additional percentage points boost the evaluation for an SRO who provided superior effort toward addressing an outcome, but despite that effort, failed to produce strong results. Likewise, these additional points curtail the points awarded to an SRO who contributed little to no effort, but despite the lack of effort, the outcome showed improvement. SRO supervisors are encouraged to discuss their level-of-effort expectations at the beginning of the school year with the SRO so that the SRO clearly understands the difference between superior effort, good effort, average effort, below average efforts, and no effort.

Table 7

Assess the SRO's Level of Effort on Each Outcome	Bonus % Points for Effort
Superior effort	+10%
Good effort	+5%
Average effort	+0%
Below average effort	−5%
No effort	−10%

Table 8 demonstrates how to combine these scores to get a total score for each outcome and an overall score.

Table 8

Priority Outcome	Points Possible (Table 3)	Outcome Finding % (Table 4)	Bonus for Effort (Table 6)	Points Awarded (Points Possible × [outcome finding % + bonus % for effort])
Thefts in the locker room	13	No Change (60%)	No Effort (−10%)	13 × (60% − 10%) = 6.5 points
Fights during lunch	24	Outcome achieved (100%)	Superior (+10%)	24 × (100% + 10%) = 26.4 points
Bullying of 6th graders	20	Partial Success (80%)	Good (+5%)	20 × (80% + 5%) = 17 points
Knowledge of drug use consequences	9	Outcome achieved (100%)	Average (0%)	9 × (100% + 0%) = 9 points
TOTAL	**66 points possible**			**58.9 points earned ÷ 66 points possible = 89%**

What Does A Overall Score of 89% Mean for the SRO's Performance Evaluation?

Law enforcement agencies could use the traditional scales used in public schools:

```
90–100%      = A
80–89%       = B
70–79%       = C
60–69%       = D
Below 60     = F
```

An alternative is to assign performance labels to this same scale. For example:

```
90–100%      = Superior
80–89%       = Good
70–79%       = Average
60–69%       = Below average
Below 60%    = Unacceptable
```

In this example, the SRO would receive a "B" or a "Good" rating.

This system may supplement other measures of punctuality, accurateness, knowledge of appropriate laws, implementation of departmental policy, and other general law enforcement measures.

One unanticipated question was addressed through the SRO performance evaluation process as well.

If Performance Evaluations Are Not Currently Used by the Law Enforcement Agency to Assist With Personnel Decisions or Do Not Have Any Consequences Such as Compensation, Promotion, or Placement, Is This SRO Performance Evaluation Process Worthwhile?

Yes. For the five law enforcement agencies that participated in this demonstration project, the experimental performance evaluation factors had very little influence on the SROs' current performance evaluation in the department. In fact, across the five law enforcement agencies, only two departments actually utilize performance evaluation to make decisions about advancement, salary, placement, or disciplinary action. Yet, all five law enforcement agencies and all six schools found value in some parts of the process.

Most of the SROs that participated in the effort saw this process as an opportunity to gain a clear understanding of their customers' expectations, to gain further insight into the safety concerns of staff and students, to showcase their role in school safety, and to have others acknowledge the achievements they have made in school.

SRO supervisors that participated gained a better understanding of what the SRO's under their command do day-to-day, highlighted the skills and expertise that new SRO recruits should possess or on which they should receive training, and drew attention to shortcomings in existing performance systems that are not grounded in the unique role of the SRO. This project afforded the SRO supervisors increased communication and interaction with their SRO and allowed supervisors to look strategically at the SRO's needs and how best to support/mentor the SRO to help him/her accomplish the outcomes. This project also provided an opportunity to interact with the school administration and forge stronger relationships.

School administrators had the opportunity to reflect on school safety data, as well as feedback from other customers, voice their safety concerns and establish a plan, in partnership with the SRO, to address them.

Students and other customers were given an opportunity to voice their concerns and learn about the SRO as a resource.

All participants gained a clearer understanding of the SRO's role.

Conclusions

Having answered the research questions and field tested our theories, we conclude that annually, law enforcement agencies and schools would greatly benefit by jointly engaging SRO customers in a process to design outcome-oriented performance measures for SROs, to track the efforts put forth toward achieving those outcomes, to assess success at accomplishing the outcomes, and to use these findings as a means of professional development for the officer, as a safety planning tool for schools, and to enhance community policing efforts in schools. We recommend that law enforcement

agencies and schools read and use *SRO Performance Evaluation: A Guide to Getting Results* to guide their efforts.

This research also lays the foundation for further research into the role of performance evaluation in law enforcement, SRO recruitment practices and standards, and SRO field training initiatives—just a few of the issues that require closer examination.

Bibliography

DeVoe, J.F., Peter, K., Kaufman, P., Ruddy, S.A., Miller, A.K., Planty, M., Snyder, T.D., Duhart, D.T., and Rand, M.R.(2002) *Indicators of School Crime and Safety: 2002*. U.S. Departments of Education and Justice: Washington, D.C.

Kelling, G. (July 1999). "Measuring What Matters: A New Way of Thinking About Crime and Public Order," in Robert Langworthy (Ed.) *Measuring What Matters: Proceedings from the Policing Research Institute Meetings*, Washington, DC: U.S. Department of Justice, National Institute of Justice and Office of Community Oriented Policing Services, pp.27-35.

Langworthy, R. (July 1999). *Measuring What Matters: Proceedings from the Policing Research Institute Meetings*, Washington, DC: U.S. Department of Justice, National Institute of Justice and Office of Community Oriented Policing Services.

Moore, M., D. Thatcher, A. Dodge, and T. Moore. (2002). *Recognizing Value in Policing: The Challenge of Measuring Police Performance*. Washington, DC: Police Executive Research Forum.

Oettmeier, T., and M. Wycoff. (1993). *Measuring Police Performance in the Nineties: Practitioner Perspectives.*

Oettmeier, T. and M. Wycoff. (1998). *Personnel Performance Evaluations in the Community Policing Context*. In T. O'Connor Shelley & A. C. Grant (Eds.), Problem-Oriented Policing: Crime-Specific Problems, Critical Issues and Making POP Work. Washington, DC: Police Executive Research Forum.

Riley, P. (April 1999). *School Resource Officers: What We Know, What We Think We Know, and What We Need to Know.* Raleigh, North Carolina: National Center for the Prevention of School Violence.

Rinehart, T. (2000). *Delivering Effective Customer Service Literature Review*. Washington, DC: U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, Office of Child Support Enforcement.

Rinehart, T., A.T. Laszlo, and M.G. Wilson. (May 1999). *School Resource Officers Focus Group Meeting Proceedings*. Washington, DC: U.S. Department of Justice, Office of Community Oriented Policing Services.

Trojanowicz, R. and B. Bucqueroux. (1992). *Toward Development of Meaningful and Effective Performance Evaluations.* East Lansing, MI: National Center for Community Policing. Also available at: http://www.cj.msu.edu/~people/cp/toward.html.

Whitaker, G., S. Mastrofski, E. Ostrom, R. Parks, and S. Percy. (1980). *Basic Issues in Police Performance*. Washington, D.C.: U.S. Department of Justice, National Institute of Justice.